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STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

VIVIAN E. COOK
82nd Assembly District
Queens County

July 1, 2004

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Mr. Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

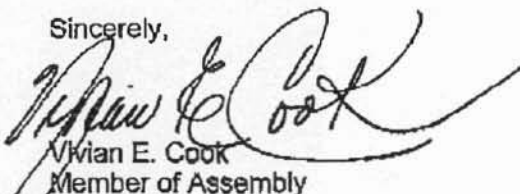
I am writing to voice my concern about the proposed "a la carte" system being debated in Congress. I urge you to oppose this proposal, as its enactment would exclude economically challenged consumers from subscribing to cable services. Further it would reduce or eliminate programming aimed at minority groups.

Channels like BET, Telemundo, TV One and ESPN Deportes have succeeded under the current cable system in large part due to the way in which they are introduced through bundling. When a new network is introduced, it is usually placed in a bundle with existing ad-supported popular channels such as CNN, ESPN or Nickelodeon, allowing viewers the opportunity to try out the new channel. If consumers find the channels interesting, the channel will gain its own audience and enough advertising revenue to become profitable. You should also consider the additional cost to install a set-top box for every television in a home required for the "a la carte" cable system. It is my understanding that the cost of leasing or purchasing these boxes is estimated to be \$4.39 per box per month. As cable households have, on average, more than 2.5 television sets, with a box required, a customer's equipment cost alone could increase by \$10.98 per month. Currently, fewer than half of U.S. Cable households today subscribe to services requiring an addressable converter.

In an effort to afford the already astronomical cost of cable, customers struggling with cable bills will opt to downsize or cancel their services. This will prevent certain economic groups from enjoying and benefiting from educational programming, such as the C-Span, The Learning Channel or the Discovery Channel.

I believe this proposal if implemented would have an adverse effect on the industry and the economy. Therefore, I urge you to sustain the system already in place and not support the "a la carte" proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Vivian E. Cook
Member of Assembly